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WASHINGTON, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) made the following statement during the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs hearing on next year's International Affairs Budget. Transcript is as follows.

Madame Secretary...I want to applaud the nomination of a U.S. Ambassador to Syria. We must be engaged with that critical country.

I also want to recognize your work to re-establish the United States as a global leader on human rights. You are speaking out against child marriage in Yemen. You are pressing Internet freedom in China. You are taking an aggressive stand against the atrocious legislation in Uganda to punish its gay and lesbian citizens.

This is the leadership the world expects from America. Thank you for making the fight for human rights your fight.

The issue I would like to discuss with you is global food security.

The fact that 1 billion people around the world are struggling with chronic hunger is a moral issue. It is an obstacle to development, and it is a strategic concern - a hungry world will never be stable or secure.

Last September, I saw that struggle again in Guatemala. Fifty percent of children in that country are physically and mentally stunted by years of under-nutrition.

There is no doubt that food security is the foundation of all the other development investments we make. If students are hungry, they cannot learn in school. If patients do not have proper nutrition, HIV medications don't work.

I strongly support the commitment that the President and you have made to developing a new, comprehensive global food security strategy.

And I am encouraged to see the strategy will focus on agricultural development - helping people grow their way out of hunger.

Last year, I advocated on this Subcommittee for the resources needed to support the new food security initiative.

Before we make decisions about a second year of funding, this Committee needs to see a detailed plan for how and where the Fiscal Year 2010 are being invested.

My first question is when can we expect to receive that information?

Secondly, I want to work with you to create the partnership with Congress needed to sustain this effort.

Food security is a long-term development strategy. Significant gains will not be achieved in 1 or 3 or even 5 years.

That is why I am working with Senator Lugar on the *Global Food Security Act* - legislation that will authorize this major new foreign assistance initiative.

Would you talk to us about your plan for engaging with this Committee and with Congress to create the support we need to make a new global food security initiative successful?

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